



IN NEW ZEALAND'S Black Museum. The horse-shoe held by the police officer (above) was a vital clue in one of the cases dramatised for the NZBS, and the plaster-cast and boot (below, right) were critical exhibits in a goldfields murder

familiar than they are with our own Criminal Investigation Branch. But the New Zealand police have handled criminals as sophisticated as any encountered in detective fiction—or in Inspector Fabian's notebook for that matter. Twenty-six of their cases, ranging from confidence-trickery and finely-calculated fraud to violent and motiveless murder, will be presented in the broadcasts. The series is entitled *From the Police Files of New Zealand*.

Last year the police force of some 2200 men dealt with a total of 75,000 crimes of all kinds. There were nine murders, all of them solved. But the paper work reaches astonishing proportions. The file of one murder case, for instance, is 18 inches thick. Scriptwriter Arthur E. Jones, of Auckland, and Senior Detective E. W. Mahood, who assisted him, had a sizeable detection job of their own when they began dredging up material for the series.

"To begin with," says Mr Jones, "I was floored by the vast amount of material. It seemed impossible to condense it into 30-minute programmes. But with Mr Mahood extracting salient points from each file, the job became possible. Working with the police on the inside, as it were, has given me a very different view of their approach. I think the listener too will be surprised at the amount of heartbreaking work—of sheer hard slogging—that goes into the solving of even the simplest crime. It is not enough for the police to know that a suspect is guilty. They must be able to prove it beyond all shadow or question of doubt."

Crime connoisseurs will find that in this series, as elsewhere, the most

interesting cases are not always concerned with the "ultimate crime" of murder. One of New Zealand's most ingenious felonies involved the theft of gold from a mining company. The company's assayer took small amounts of concentrate at regular intervals for many years. He smelted the metal himself, and when he had £30,000 worth, he resigned his position. The company was sorry to lose a trusted and valuable servant. He successfully smuggled the gold out of New Zealand and into Canada. Not till he was searched by customs men at the U.S. border was the gold discovered. And not till later did the police begin to speculate about how he came by so much gold. It was the *almost* perfect crime, possessing as it did the unusual advantage that no one knew any crime had been committed.

Turning the scripted cases into broadcasts has been a joint effort by Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch production studios, with William Austin in overall charge of production. T. V. Anson provides the linking narrative throughout. A deliberate effort has been

made to give the programmes the quiet, undramatic air of reality.

Says Senior Detective Mahood: "I didn't think it was possible to turn a police file into a radio show, but now I've seen it done and I think listeners will enjoy the programmes."



(From the Police Files of New Zealand starts on Thursday, October 10, from 2ZA, 2XA, 2XN and 3XC, at 7.30 p.m., and from all ZBs, 1XH, 2ZC and 4ZA at 8.30 p.m.; from 2XG at 7.30 on October 11, and from 1XN and 2XP the following week.)